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REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCLUDING DOCUMENT OF THE TWELFTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: REGIONAL CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES: ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SECURITY QUESTIONS IN CENTRAL AFRICA

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 3 November 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Cameroon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the report and Yaoundé Declaration on Peace, Security and Development adopted by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the member countries of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa at the conclusion of their tenth meeting, held at Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 26 to 30 October 1998.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Martin BELINGA EBOUTOU
Minister Plenipotentiary

ANNEX I

Report of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa on its Tenth Ministerial Meeting held at Yaoundé from 26 to 30 October 1998

INTRODUCTION

1. The tenth meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was held at Yaoundé from 26 to 30 October 1998.

2. The following States members took part in the meeting: Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe. Angola and Rwanda were unable to attend.

3. The following also participated in the work of the meeting: the representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations; the representative of the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU); and the Secretary-General of the Central African Customs and Economic Union (CACEU)/CEMAC.

4. The host country for the ministerial meeting invited the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and the following countries as observers: Belgium, Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea.

5. At the opening ceremony of the ministerial meeting, statements were made by: the current Chairman of the Committee, His Excellency Mr. Casimir Oyemba, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Gabonese Republic; the representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Cheikh-Tidiane Gaye, Director of the United Nations Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who read out a message from the Secretary-General; the representative of the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, His Excellency Mr. Pascal Gayama, Assistant Secretary-General of OAU, who read out a message from the Secretary-General of OAU; and His Excellency Mr. Peter Mafany Musonge, Prime Minister, Head of Government of the Republic of Cameroon, who formally opened the meeting.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

6. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

(i) Election of the Committee Bureau.

(ii) Report of the outgoing Bureau, by the Chairman.

(iii) Consideration of the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

(iv) Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa.

(v) Inter-State cooperation in security matters among the countries of Central Africa.

(vi) Evaluation of the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Standing Advisory Committee contained in the report of the Meeting of Ministers of Defence and of the Interior held at Libreville, Gabon, from 28 to 30 April 1998, and in the Bata Declaration, adopted at the ministerial meeting held at Bata, Equatorial Guinea, from 18 to 21 May 1998, on democratic institutions and peace in Central Africa, including:

Establishment of an early warning mechanism;

Organization of military exercises in connection with peacekeeping operations between the armed forces of the countries of Central Africa;

Establishment of a Supreme Council for the promotion of peace and the Prevention, Management and Resolution of Political Crises and Armed Conflict in Central Africa;

Establishment of a subregional parliament in Central Africa.

(vii) Consideration of the proposed establishment of a subregional centre for human rights and democracy.

(viii) Consideration and adoption of the report of the ministerial meeting.

(ix) Consideration and adoption of the final declaration.

CONDUCT OF WORK

I. ELECTION OF THE COMMITTEE BUREAU

7. The Committee elected a new Bureau, as follows:

Chairman: Cameroon

First Vice-Chairman: Chad

Second Vice-Chairman: Burundi

Rapporteur: Democratic Republic of the Congo.

II. REPORT OF THE OUTGOING BUREAU

8. The Committee took note of the report by His Excellency Mr. Casimir Oyemba, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Gabonese Republic, as outgoing Chairman. The Committee expressed its gratification at the dynamism and efficiency with which the outgoing Bureau had discharged its mandate.

III. CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE CAUSES OF CONFLICT AND THE PROMOTION OF DURABLE PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

9. The Committee reaffirmed the importance and relevance of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. It decided to make the report a working document.

10. The Committee welcomed the fact that the Security Council and General Assembly of the United Nations and international financial institutions had undertaken to help Africa to implement the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report. In that connection it welcomed with satisfaction the adoption of Security Council resolution 1197 (1998), which requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to assist OAU and subregional organizations in conflict prevention and peacekeeping and peace-building in Africa.

11. The Committee noted that several recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report had already been implemented in the subregion and that they mirrored, for the most part, the measures which it had previously adopted.

12. The Committee invited the United Nations and the international community to support the projects formulated by it to implement the recommendations contained in the report.

13. In view of the importance of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, the Committee mandated its Bureau to take appropriate steps to organize a high-level seminar aimed at facilitating implementation of the recommendations of relevance to Central Africa.

IV. REVIEW OF THE GEOPOLITICAL AND SECURITY SITUATIONS IN CENTRAL AFRICA

Burundi

14. The Committee welcomed the positive developments in Burundi and in particular the conclusion of the agreement on the political platform between the Government and the National Assembly with a view to establishing transition institutions.

15. It encouraged the Government to maintain the dialogue begun with all the parties to the conflict, including the armed bands.

16. The Committee mandated the Chairman of the Bureau to take appropriate steps with a view to the immediate lifting of the embargo, which had had disastrous consequences for the population of Burundi and in particular the most vulnerable segments of Burundian society.

Cameroon

17. The Committee welcomed the climate of peace and stability prevailing after the various electoral exercises held in Cameroon. In that regard it welcomed the policy of openness, reconciliation and participation followed by the President of the Republic of Cameroon, His Excellency Mr. Paul Biya. That policy would assist in the promotion and consolidation of "quiet democracy", a factor for social peace.

18. In view of the importance for peace and security in the Gulf of Guinea of the border dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria, the Committee supported the efforts of the Cameroonian Government in the quest for a peaceful settlement through legal means of the dispute. In that connection it called on all States parties to the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War to ensure its full implementation. The Committee noted with satisfaction the attitude of Cameroon in that regard.

19. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the International Court of Justice had declared itself competent to hear the dispute. It appealed to friendly countries and to the international community for assistance in maintaining peace between the two countries before, during and after the Court's verdict.

20. In that regard the Committee urged the two parties to comply fully with the interim measures of protection handed down by the Court in its order of 15 March 1996.

Congo

21. The Committee welcomed the restoration of peace in the Congo and took note with satisfaction of the measures taken by the Congolese authorities to promote national reconciliation, the reconstruction of the country, respect for fundamental rights and freedoms and the relaunching of the democratic process.

22. It appealed to the international community to support the efforts of the Congo, which fell fully within the context of the consolidation of peace.

Gabon

23. The Committee welcomed continuance of the democratic process in Gabon, in particular the establishment of institutions for the regulation of democracy, such as the National Council on Communication (CNC) and the National Council on Democracy.

24. The Committee took note of the imminent holding in Gabon for the second consecutive time since the advent of a multi-party system of free and transparent presidential elections.

25. The Committee also commended the constant efforts of the President of the Gabonese Republic, His Excellency Mr. El Hadj Omar Bongo, to promote peace and security in the Central African subregion.

Equatorial Guinea

26. The Committee took note of the information provided by the delegation of Equatorial Guinea on the events which had taken place in that country on 17 May 1997 and 21 January 1998.

27. The Committee commended the Government of Equatorial Guinea on its efforts to restore peace and national harmony.

28. It recommended closer cooperation among the countries of Central Africa to avoid destabilization of the subregion.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

29. The Committee, deeply concerned by the situation obtaining in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, welcomed the varied initiatives taken to reach a settlement of the crisis in that country, in particular that of 24 September 1998 by the President, His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo.

30. The Committee made an urgent appeal for the conclusion of a ceasefire and for the respect for the principles of the inviolability of inherited colonial borders, national sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-intervention, set forth in the Charters of the Organization of African Unity and of the United Nations.

31. The Committee mandated the Chairman of the Bureau to take all initiatives that might contribute to a final settlement of the crisis and to the immediate and unconditional withdrawal from the Democratic Republic of the Congo of foreign forces of aggression.

Central African Republic

32. The Committee welcomed the positive developments in the Central African Republic owing, inter alia, to the presence of the United Nations Mission (MINURCA). Nevertheless, it noted that:

Restructuring of the Central African armed forces was still under way;

Forty-five per cent of the light weapons had yet to be collected;

The situation remained precarious.

33. The Committee strongly recommended the maintenance of MINURCA beyond the holding of legislative and presidential elections. It mandated the Chairman of

the Bureau to undertake initiatives in that regard vis-à-vis the Security Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Sao Tome and Principe

34. The Committee again noted with satisfaction the efforts of the Government of Sao Tome and Principe to consolidate the democratic process which was assisting in the strengthening of peace in the subregion.

35. In that regard, the Committee took note with satisfaction of the positive status of preparations for the holding, in early November, of the third pluralist legislative election.

Chad

36. The Committee welcomed the outstretched-hand policy of President Idriss Deby.

37. It welcomed the measures taken to restrict the circulation of small-calibre weapons and the decisive manner in which disarmament operations had been carried out.

38. It also welcomed the commencement of demining operations through the support of friendly countries, and encouraged the international community and non-governmental organizations to make contributions with a view to concluding those operations.

39. The Committee encouraged Chad to consolidate peace by maintaining its policy for the promotion of human rights.

V. INTER-STATE COOPERATION IN SECURITY MATTERS AMONG THE COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL AFRICA

40. During the consideration of this item, the Committee noted with satisfaction the actions and initiatives taken by the States members within the framework of cooperation in security matters aimed, in particular, at lessening tension and combating insecurity in the border areas as well as making it possible to have exchanges between the various national structures dealing with these questions.

41. In view of the transborder nature of most of the security problems in the subregion and owing to the need to respond to them in a joint and concerted manner, the Committee strongly recommended greater cooperation and dialogue among the security forces of the Central African countries, particularly within the framework of periodic meetings and the organization of joint operations.

42. The Committee expressed grave concern about the phenomenon of the illegal circulation of small-calibre weapons and drug trafficking, which constitute a major factor for insecurity in the subregion; it recommended the holding of a subregional conference on these questions and the elaboration of legal

monitoring instruments and the adoption of other appropriate measures to deal with that scourge.

43. A mandate was given to the Chairman of the Bureau to request the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the heads of the international organizations concerned to provide the necessary assistance for speedily organizing such a conference.

44. Recalling the importance of the Non-Aggression Pact concluded in 1996 between the countries of Central Africa for peace and security in the subregion, the Committee invited the countries that had signed the Pact to ratify it. It mandated the Chairman of the Bureau to continue the initiatives undertaken with the countries of the subregion, particularly Angola and Rwanda, which have not yet signed the Pact, so that it can enter into force as soon as possible.

45. Aware of the need to strengthen cooperation in the field of peace and security in the subregion, the Committee recommended the establishment of an appropriate legal framework.

VI. EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE CONTAINED IN THE REPORT OF THE MEETING OF MINISTERS OF DEFENCE AND OF THE INTERIOR, HELD AT LIBREVILLE, GABON, FROM 28 TO 30 APRIL 1998, AND IN THE BATA DECLARATION, ADOPTED AT THE SUBREGIONAL CONFERENCE ON DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND PEACE IN CENTRAL AFRICA, HELD AT BATA, EQUATORIAL GUINEA, FROM 18 TO 21 MAY 1998, INCLUDING:

Establishment of an early warning mechanism

46. After an in-depth exchange of views on this item and taking into consideration, in particular, the progress made in this area, the Committee committed itself to the effective establishment of an early warning mechanism, thanks to the voluntary contribution made by the Government of the United States of America through OAU and a grant allocated from available resources in the Trust Fund.

47. The Committee once again appeals to the international community to contribute generously to the Trust Fund.

48. The Committee mandated the Chairman of the Bureau to take all necessary steps approaching the Secretary-General of the United Nations with a view to obtaining assistance for putting the mechanism into operation.

Organization of military exercises in connection with peacekeeping operations between the armed forces of the countries of Central Africa

49. The Committee took note of the recommendations contained in the report drawn up on the question by experts from the subregion and submitted to the various general staffs. It stressed, in particular, the need both to organize

joint military exercises for peacekeeping operations and to ensure an effective contribution by the States members themselves to the holding of those exercises.

50. Taking into account, however, the sizeable amount of resources necessary for organizing such exercises, which aim to strengthen the operational capacities of the countries of the subregion in maintaining peace, the Committee appealed to the international community and, in particular, to the United Nations to provide considerable assistance.

51. In this regard, the Committee mandated the Chairman of the Bureau to continue the necessary initiatives with the United Nations and the donor countries.

Establishment of a Supreme Council for the Promotion of Peace and the Prevention, Management and Resolution of Political Crises and Armed Conflict in Central Africa

52. The Committee recognized the need to establish, within the subregion, a structure for preventing, managing and resolving conflicts making it possible to overcome the current institutional vacuum in this field; such a structure would help to strengthen trust and promote peace, security and lasting development in Central Africa.

53. To that end, it recommended that consideration should be given to the question of establishing a "Supreme Council for the Promotion of Peace and the Prevention, Management and Resolution of Political Crises and Armed Conflict in Central Africa" through a summit meeting of heads of State and Government of the subregion. The Committee mandated the Chairman of the Bureau to initiate consultations for holding such a summit meeting.

Establishment of a subregional parliament

54. The Committee took note of the conclusions of the Ministerial Conference in Bata recommending the establishment of a subregional parliament. It welcomed the efforts already made by the President of Equatorial Guinea, His Excellency Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, to implement the project.

55. The Committee recommended that those efforts should continue in order to enable a summit meeting of heads of State and Government to establish the subregional parliament. A meeting to be convened by the Chairman of the Bureau and attended by experts and members of parliament was recommended in this regard.

VII. CONSIDERATION OF THE PROJECT TO ESTABLISH A SUBREGIONAL CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

56. The Committee once again expressed its support for establishing in Yaoundé a subregional centre for human rights and democracy under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

57. A mandate was given to the Chairman of the Bureau to take the necessary steps to carry out this project.

VIII. CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MINISTERIAL MEETING

58. After considering the draft text, the Ministers adopted this report, which approves the work of the tenth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

IX. CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE FINAL DECLARATION

At the conclusion of their work, the Ministers also adopted the Yaoundé Declaration on Peace, Security and Development in Central Africa, which is annexed to the report.

ANNEX II

Yaoundé Declaration on peace, security and development in Central Africa, adopted at Yaoundé on 30 October 1998

1. The tenth meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 29 to 30 October 1998.

2. The Ministers recalled that the Committee had been established by the United Nations General Assembly on the initiative of countries members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). They again stressed the Committee's political importance as the preferred forum for dialogue in the subregion concerning confidence-building, peace and security.

3. The Ministers therefore recommended that the Committee should establish its presence in the subregion so as to make its programme of activities more operational. In that connection, member States reaffirmed their commitment to contribute financially to the Committee's programme of activities.

4. The Ministers acknowledged that since the end of the cold war, security questions had assumed a multidimensional character which called for the implementation of measures covering the political area and also arms limitation and control, development and human rights. To that end, the Ministers mandated the Chairman of the Bureau with ensuring that that comprehensive approach was fully reflected in the discussion by the United Nations General Assembly of the agenda item concerning the Committee's activities.

5. The Ministers reiterated their attachment to the fundamental principles set forth in the Charters of the United Nations and of the Organization of African Unity, including:

Sovereign equality of all States

Non-interference in the internal affairs of States

Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each State

Inviolability of inherited colonial borders

6. The Ministers acknowledged that the establishment of lasting peace and sustainable development in Central Africa called for solidarity and full cooperation among all member States of the Committee. In that connection, they recommended that their representatives in the various international bodies should consult one another on an ongoing basis in order to harmonize their positions on issues of common interest. They decided to establish a committee of ambassadors of all member States at the level of all international organizations to harmonize and coordinate their positions on peace and security in Central Africa.

7. The Ministers expressed profound disquiet at the continuing tensions, crises and conflicts in Central Africa. They underscored their great concern at the situation which continued to cause the loss of many human lives, and also substantial material damage and indescribable suffering to the population, inter alia, to refugees and displaced persons.

8. Emphasizing the importance of prevention as a means of averting the eruption of further conflicts in the subregion, the Ministers reiterated the need for the establishment as soon as possible of an early warning system for Central Africa and for the establishment by the Heads of State and Government of a dispute settlement body.

9. The Ministers encouraged the countries of the subregion to work with renewed determination to promote respect for human rights and freedoms and the establishment of the rule of law and democratic political systems so as to permit full participation in political life by all social forces.

10. Considering that peace and development are inextricably linked, the Ministers emphasized the need for countries of the subregion to mobilize the bulk of their resources and efforts in order to improve the situation of their people and, in particular, of the most underprivileged groups. They also recognized that the debt burden weighing on their countries was likely to mortgage their development efforts. Accordingly, they launched an urgent appeal to their bilateral and multilateral partners for an appropriate solution to be found to that thorny problem.

11. The Ministers declared that the struggle for the eradication of poverty should be a major concern of their countries with a view to the establishment of a lasting peace. Strongly emphasizing that the difficult economic situation of member States of the Committee constituted a factor of instability that threatened peace and security in the subregion, they launched a pressing appeal to the international community and, in particular, to the international financial institutions, for increased support for their economic recovery efforts.

12. The Ministers emphasized the need to intensify cooperation and multifaceted trade between their countries, inter alia, by revitalizing economic groups, so as to encourage mixing of their peoples and to establish a culture of peace and of dialogue in the customs of the subregion.

13. The Ministers expressed their profound concern regarding the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which carries within it the seeds of serious risk of destabilization of the entire subregion.

14. Recalling the declaration issued by the Heads of State and Government of Central Africa at the close of their meeting of 24 September 1998 at Libreville, they appealed for a ceasefire in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of foreign forces of aggression, for respect for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for the stepping up of the democratization process in that country.

15. Having in mind the Libreville Declaration of 24 September 1998, and expressing their profound concern regarding the deterioration of the situation in Angola and the halting of the peace process in that country, the Ministers urged the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) to comply forthwith with the peace agreements, the Lusaka Protocol and relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

16. The Ministers welcomed the decision of the Security Council to extend the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA) until 3 December 1998 and launched an urgent appeal to all parties to embark resolutely on the road to peace and national construction in order to put an end to the hideous suffering that the Angolan people and, in particular, displaced persons, continued to endure.

17. Stressing the importance of the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola at this critical point in that country's history, the Ministers launched a pressing appeal to the international community asking it to support the presence of that observer Mission beyond 3 December 1998, so as to once again give the process of peace and national reconciliation a chance and thereby avert a general conflagration of the country.

18. The Ministers paid tribute to the memory of Mr. Alioune Blondin Beye, who had perished with his staff, for his invaluable contribution to the search for peace in Angola.

19. The Ministers acknowledged that full implementation of the Bangui Agreements and National Reconciliation Pact is essential to national peace and reconciliation in the Central African Republic. They welcomed the significant progress made by the Central African Government in implementing the Bangui Agreements and the launching of major political and economic reforms.

20. The Ministers noted with satisfaction the decision by the Security Council to include in the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA) support for the organization of the legislative elections of 22 November and 13 December 1998.

21. Recalling the importance of the role of MINURCA in the maintenance of a climate of security and stability conducive to the strengthening of the process of national reconciliation in the Central African Republic, the Ministers emphasized that MINURCA should not end its activities once and for all until the electoral processes were completed and national reconciliation was sufficiently consolidated.

22. Underscoring the need for the continuation of a constructive dialogue between all elements of the population of Burundi, with a view to strengthening the national reconciliation process, the Ministers expressed concern at the suffering endured by the Burundian people due to the embargo against that country, and launched a pressing appeal for the immediate lifting of that embargo.

23. The Ministers expressed their concern at the persistence of tensions between Cameroon and Nigeria in the Bakassi peninsula. They reaffirmed the need

for the two countries, which have referred the matter to the International Court of Justice for a peaceful settlement of their dispute, to avoid any action that might increase tension between them. They further urged those countries to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. Finally, they appealed to the international community for assistance in preserving the peace before, during and after the verdict of the International Court of Justice.

24. The Ministers mandated the Chairman of the Bureau with undertaking and carrying out any mediation likely to help restore or strengthen peace and a lasting national reconciliation in the member States in crisis.

25. The Ministers appealed to the United Nations for assistance in organizing a subregional conference on ways and means of halting the proliferation and illicit marketing of arms and drugs in Central Africa.

26. The Ministers noted that their meeting was taking place at a time when the United Nations was celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of peacekeeping operations. They reaffirmed their support for the Secretary-General of the United Nations and expressed their profound gratitude to the Organization for its unflagging efforts to restore and strengthen peace in Africa and, in particular, in the central African subregion.